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Experiences in Bird Attraction

To attract birds to my garden on the outskirts of Oakland, I have provided three feeding trays, a bird bath and a brush-pile. These means have helped bring to my grounds the following: Valley Quail, California Jay, California Linnet, Pine Siskin, Green-backed Goldfinch, Brown Towhee, Spotted Towhee, Oregon Junco, Nuttall White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox and Song Sparrows.

The birds have become so abundant that as many as ten to twenty can often be seen feeding at the same time on a single tray. Even in winter there is scarcely a moment during the day that bird songs are not heard: either White-crowned, Song Sparrow, Linnet, occasionally a Golden-crowned or the trill of a Junco.

They are fed seeds; and most of them have a pleasing preference for the cheaper grains. Baby-chick feed at four cents, and hemp seed at five cents a pound, seem to be as satisfactory to them as canary seed or millet seed at ten cents.

One tray, on the ground for the particular benefit of the Quail, has kaffir corn. The Quail are wild about it. The other trays, on stands, have baby-chick feed and hemp seed, both widely popular,—and sunflower seed, which is especially liked by the Linnets and is the only seed that attracts the handsome, dashing Jay.

The bird-bath, of rough surfaced cast cement, is on the ground, and is used in dry weather by many birds, notably the Quail, Linnets and Goldfinches.

The brush-pile, unsightly in the eyes of man, is highly appreciated by the birds. Not only do the Towhees and the Fox Sparrows regard it as their especial habitat, but any alarm in the garden sends a flock of twittering small birds to its welcome cover.

I have been interested to observe that the suet holders and Hummer bottles, which were an amazing bird attraction in a Berkeley garden last year, have in this garden thus far brought no results,—at least not among the vertebrates, but persistent Wasps and multitudinous Argentine Ants were keen, until conquered by chemical warfare.

Well, how about the ubiquitous House Sparrows? Not one seen in six months! And how about the predatory house cats? Devils! But conquered by discreet chemical warfare.—Herman de Fremery.



Food and Shelter in an Eastern Winter. Our "Hilltop," consisting of three acres of terraced land, contains a small grove of trees: maples, elms, poplars and willows; also some fruit trees, shrubs, bushes, berry patches and two half-acre gardens, one for flowers and one for vegetables. These are all very attractive to birds. To add to the allurements I have fashioned cozy bird houses, which serve as much appreciated shelter during the difficult winter season. My feeding stations or bird cafeterias scattered about are visited by an average of 150 birds in summer and 300 in winter.

In this vicinity we have Snow Buntings, Chickadees, Red-headed Woodpeckers, a wide variety of Sparrows, and among the larger birds the saucy Jays, noisy Starlings and Flickers.

The unprecedented glaze storm (as the papers termed it) of December took a big toll in bird life. The cold sleet, unrelenting for nearly two days, rapidly formed thick coatings of ice on everything. There wasn't a twig to stand on. Tiny claws, forced to clutch a branch for balance in an effort to withstand the high winds, were frozen, and in many instances hopelessly imprisoned. Large birds too were rendered helpless in this way, and many that did survive came out of the siege minus toes or a leg. Wings were stiffened by the crystal crust, and the birds forced to the ground by this handicap became the prey of prowling cats.

When evidence of these cruel conditions was first seen, man hastened to alleviate the suffering. Then, all lovers of wild life had their hearts gladdened by the earnest appeals for help made by the newspapers throughout the State. Liberal spaces were devoted to articles requesting funds and food, and giving instructions as to rendering aid. The response was prompt and generous: funds for food and sacks of food were sent to park officials, and households never before thoughtful of birds, provided food and shelter.

My room contains five windows: two open out on a broad roof, 9x25 feet, and two on a large enclosed porch. I left one of the sliding porch windows open, put a log on a solid table, to which I nailed big pieces of suet, and alongside placed shallow dishes filled with scratch feed of shelled corn, hominy, millet, hemp, sunflower seed and cornmeal, as well as peanut butter made into a paste, with cracker meal and hominy grits. In order to keep this "air restaurant" accessible to the small birds, I arranged on the roof by the window opposite a box shelter against the house 16"x16"x6', in which I placed the same kind of supplies. By this plan I diverted the large birds from the porch, and the small birds ate undisturbed.

About a year ago Hungarian Quail or Partridges were added to the State's game birds. These birds resist the cold weather very well, and frequently roost right in the open. They keep warm by gathering into a bunch, and roost in a snow bank quite as well as in cover ordinarily, but during the ice storm they sought sheltered quarters.

In a nearby town there is a hill covered with big timber which has always been the home of barred owls. During the storm it was revealed that the owls were feasting upon the introduced species; and it is being wondered if the former will finally exterminate the new specimens. The latter had wandered far from the place where they were liberated. After the storm we counted thirty on our own place, and learned that neighbors were feeding and trying to care for others with their chickens.

About three miles from here lies Letchworth Park, famous for its extensive bird reservation, and a few miles beyond are a number of large estates which also serve as bird refuges. These attract wild pheasants, and frequently we have had as many as fifteen on our own property. We keep a liberal supply of scratch feed in the garden for them. During the storm, with three inches of sleet and a foot of snow covering the natural food supply, these timid creatures, as well as all other wild life, looked to man for aid and protection which, in this instance, was given of bountifully, both in food and shelter.—Loriot V. Lamoureux, Castile, New York, January 25, 1930.



Suet Feeders in Berkeley. The literature stresses Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Chickadees and Jays, as the birds most likely to be found feeding on suet. Last year I had suet out all winter, in my garden on the outskirts of Berkeley. The suet was contained in Packard holders, and rested on top of a fence railing. The Jays came all right, but not a Woodpecker, Nuthatch or Chickadee was ever seen. On the other hand, I was delighted to observe the following unexpected frequenters of the suet holders: White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Song and Fox Sparrows, Audubon Warbler, Wren-tit and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.—Herman de Fremery.

Audubon Notes

April Meeting will be held on Thursday evening, the 10th, at 8 o'clock, Room 19, 2nd Floor, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Dr. William E. Ritter, Director Emeritus of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Subject: "Some Points in the Field Study of Birds."



April Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 13th, to Lake Merced. East Bay members should reach San Francisco about 8:30 A. M. Take Municipal car marked K, transfer to M car at St. Francis Loop beyond Twin Peaks Tunnel, get off at Junipero Serra Boulevard, where party will form at 9:30. Bring luncheon and filled canteens. Time from ferry to meeting place, about forty minutes. Leaders, Paul Bunker and Arthur Myer.



An extra May Field Trip will be taken to McCoy's Ranch near Livermore, May 18th. Members who have automobiles and are willing to help make this trip possible, are asked to send their names and number of persons they can accommodate to C. A. Bryant, 150 Franklin Street, San Francisco, not later than April 25th.

Members, without automobiles, who wish to make the trip, please send in their names so that transportation arrangements can be made.



March Meeting: The 158th regular meeting was held March 13th, in Room 19, Ferry Building, with forty members and guests present. President Brighton C. Cain, presiding.

The following new members were elected:

Miss Beatrice M. Wise, Oakland; Mr. George Haley, Berkeley; Miss Alfreda Kirsch, and Mrs. Wm. F. Booth, Jr., of San Francisco.

Field observations were made as follows:

Mr. Jencks: March 8th, Oakland, a pair of Saw-whet Owls.

Mr. Lockerbie: February 22nd and 23rd, San Francisco Beach, two Pacific Fulmars and one Rhinoceros Auklet, all dead, taken to University of California for specimens. Near San Clemente, Marin County, March 2nd, White-tailed Kite.

The speaker of the evening, Mr. Frederic T. Jencks, narrated his experiences in ornithological researches from his boyhood on through the greater part of his life.



Editor's Column: Through the generosity of our fellow member, Mr. C. B. Lastreto, it was made possible last month to issue an eight-page "Gull." This provided for the publishing of annual reports and the Christmas census, both long overdue.

Financial assistance of this kind is greatly appreciated. However, our income from dues will be sufficient to meet the regular expenses of "The Gull" and, occasionally when necessary, to issue a special edition, if all our members will feel their responsibility and pay their dues promptly.

Annual reports and articles pertinent to a particular season of the year should be published while their element of interest is greatest.

Therefore, if you have overlooked sending the Treasurer that three dollar check for 1930, mail it today, thereby doing your bit in supporting a good cause.



Book Notice: "The Natural History of the Double-crested Cormorant," by Harrison F. Lewis, published December, 1929, by Ru-Mi-Lou Books, Ottawa, Canada, price 75c.

This is a study of the Eastern form. Bent, however, thinks that its life history is very similar to that of the Pacific Coast form known as the "Farallon" Cormorant. All aspects of the bird's life are dealt with in most readable fashion, and this little monograph may be recommended to those who are interested in the behavior of birds as well as in their occurrence. Cormorants are peculiar birds (water-birds with easily wetted plumage, for instance), and the reading of such a study should render them all the more interesting to observe.

The author ends his work with the cautious statement that the Cormorant is "not without intelligence, amiability and interest." Well, it was also good for this Ph. D. thesis, and we hope that more aspirants to high degree will take for the subjects of their

theses the natural histories of bird species.



March Field Trip was taken the 16th to Point Bonita. The weather was threatening at first; but what a glorious day it turned out to be! Glorious it was for the lover of the out-of-doors, and perfect for the seeker of birds and the botanist.

From the boat and along the Sausalito shore, Gulls, Grebes, Loons, Cormorants and one Murre were observed; while along the road, birds which seem to prefer humans for neighbors were recorded: Goldfinches, Hummers, Lutescent Warblers and Cedar Waxwings, one hundred and nineteen of the latter in one flock perched on the telephone wires.

From Fort Baker we took the road going through the tunnel and down the valley which shelters birds not so trusting: Wilson Snipe, Savannah Sparrows and Horned Larks. At Rodeo Lagoon, were Coots, Eared Grebes, Mallards, Ravens and one lone Kingfisher. At the beach, Western Grebes were seen, off shore in large numbers.

A visit to the Lighthouse added no new birds to our list but proved an interesting place. Just why it is, when one has an hour or two to sit on the ledge below the light and dangle one's feet over the Pacific way below, no birds of special interest appear? But, if time is short, the way long and perhaps dark, what interesting birds appear around the rocks from the ocean! So it has been for many years,—one of the lures of bird study, I suppose.

Returning, four members and three guests hiked by way of the Joy Ranch and over the top of the highest hill to Sausalito. Near the ranch were found among a flock of Juncos, four which proved to be Slate-colored. At this

point also were seen a large flock of Redwings and four Western Lark Sparrows.

Birds observed were: Red-throated Loon; American Eared, Western and Pied-billed Grebes; Farallon Double-crested, Brandt and Baird Pelagic Cormorants; Common Mallard and Canvas-back Ducks; White-winged and Surf Scoters; Ruddy Duck; Cooper, Western Red-tailed, Marsh and Desert Sparrow Hawks; Coast California Quail; American Coot; Northern Killdeer; Wilson Snipe; Glaucous-winged, Northern Western and California Gulls; California Murre; Owl (species?); Anna and Allen Hummingbirds; Western Belted Kingfisher; Monterey Red-shafted Flicker; Willow Downy Woodpecker; Black Phoebe; California Horned Lark; Northern Violet-green Swallow; Northwestern California Jay; Western Raven; American Crow; Marin Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Pacific Coast Bush-tit; Ruddy Wren-tit; Nicasio Bewick Wren; Western Robin; Dwarf Hermit Thrush; Western Mexican Bluebird; Western Ruby-crowned Kinglet; American Pipit; Cedar Waxwing; Lutescent Orange-crowned and Pacific Audubon Warblers; San Francisco Yellowthroat; Western Meadowlark; San Francisco Red-winged and California Brewer Blackbirds; English House Sparrow; California Linnet; Northern Pine Siskin; Willow American and Arkansas Green-backed Goldfinches; San Francisco Spotted Towhee; Western Savannah and Western Lark Sparrows; Eastern Slate-colored and Sierra Nevada Oregon Juncos; Golden, Nuttall White-crowned and Marin Song Sparrows. Sixty-five species and subspecies.

Members in attendance, 16; guests, 17. C. R. Thomas, historian.

Audubon Association of the Pacific For the Study and Protection of Birds

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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.
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Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.